

L&PS New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety

Division of Gaming Enforcement

John J. Farmer, Jr., Attorney General

Kathryn Flicker, Director

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Katherine Lyons (609) 777-2403

Emily J. Hornaday (609) 984-1936

Three Defendants Plead Guilty in Credit Card Fraud Ring

ATLANTIC CITY -- Three defendants entered guilty pleas late yesterday for their roles in a credit card fraud ring that allegedly bilked at least \$135,000 out of Atlantic City casinos, Division of Criminal Justice Director Kathryn Flicker and Attorney General John J. Farmer, Jr. announced.

Sidney Spence (DOB 12/25/65), of the 900 block of E. Westmoreland Street, Philadelphia, pleaded guilty to second-degree racketeering, and Wanda Slate (DOB 5/4/63), also of the 900 block of E. Westmoreland Street, pleaded guilty to second-degree conspiracy before Atlantic County Superior Court Judge Albert J. Garofolo. Tameka Nash (DOB 11/12/73), of the 8000 block of Gilbert Street, Philadelphia, pleaded guilty to second-degree conspiracy before Atlantic County Superior Court Judge Arthur V. Guerrera. All three are scheduled for sentencing June 8, 2001.

Sidney Spence and his brother, Sherode, were indicted on February 26, 2001, with 10 co-defendants for their alleged roles in arranging thefts of credit cards from the handbags and purses of women movie patrons at theaters in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. It is alleged that the Spence brothers would "hire" women to take the stolen credit cards to Atlantic City, generally accompanied by a family member or Sherode Spence's girlfriend, Tamika Nash, then use the credit cards to obtain cash advances in casinos, Flicker said.

The alleged ring operated from January 15, 1996 through August 7, 2000, when Sherode and Sydney Spence were arrested by State Police assigned to the Division of Gaming Enforcement.

On April 10, 2001, Sharon Vidra (DOB 2/23/80), of the 4000 block of Comly Street, Philadelphia, pleaded guilty to third degree fraudulent use of a credit card and is scheduled for sentencing June 22, 2001.

Several of the co-defendants who were indicted February 26, 2001, remain fugitives from justice. They are: Mendolyn Spence (DOB 8/18/44), of the 300 block of E. Upsal Street;

Stephen Sanders (DOB 10/6/65), of the 3000 block of Berkley Drive; Michael Wright (DOB unavailable), specific address unavailable; and Angie Jiron (DOB 2/24/79), of the 4000 block of Wylausing Avenue. All are from Philadelphia.

The cases against Zachary Spence (DOB 2/2/55), of the 5100 block of Katherine Street; Crystal Sellers (DOB 7/11/74), of the 4000 block of Tackawanna Street; and Jennifer Nelsen (DOB 5/31/73), of 4000 block of Duffield Street, all from Philadelphia, are still pending.

Deputy Attorney General Kerry Menchen of the Casino Prosecutions Bureau is handling the case for the Division of Criminal Justice.

All defendants are presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty.

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